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THE FUTURE USE OF THE BIBLE.

Charles Strong, D. D.

Some time ago the president(Dr. Gosman) of the Congregational Union, whose annual meeting was held in Melbourne towards the end of last year, delivered an address on the above subject. It has attracted considerable attention and has led to a correspondence in the columns of our leading daily newspapers.

Gosman did not say anything very new, but, coming from the president of the Congregational Union, his words gain an importance they might not otherwise have attached to them. He simply expressed his acceptance of the results of the latest Biblical criticism with regard to the Old Testament, and while not himself renouncing the belief in the virgin birth and the physical resurrection, declared himself in favor of toleration for those who could not accept these as literal facts.

The Anglican bishop, Dr. Clarke, was at once up in arms, and remonstrated with Dr. Gosman. His lordship has been lecturing on the history of his church and among other things has touched on the criticism of the gospel narratives, averring that it could now be accepted as established that our New Testament books were all written **in the first century.** This state-

ment brought forth more letters, in which the bishop certainly did not have the best of it.

Such discussions, not confined to Australia, show how unstable is the ground on which the creed-bound churches are built. They rest on a theory of Biblical impossibility and of religion as a dogma, or miraculously communicated truth to be received on the strength of the miracle which it is no longer possible to accept.

The Roman church can fall back on tradition and an infallible interpreter, as the Abbey Loisy proposed to do, while accepting the latest criticism; but the Protestant cannot do this.

The old Protestanism, therefore, having served its day, must now cease to be. Or rather, we prefer to say, the old Protestantism must pass into the new, into a universal and catholic religion based not on a book, but on the rational, ethical and spiritual nature of man.

This is the great change that is in the air; and such discussions as are now taking place regarding the Bible are slowly but surely preparing men's minds for "the larger faith."

The task which lies before the "Liberal Churches," by whatever name they may be called, is a mighty one. They are assisting at the birth of a new spiritual stage in the history of religion.

The process may be a long and a difficult one, involving disappointment and seeming failure on the part of pioneers. But can any work be nobler than seeking to give back to mankind in new and larger form faith in a living God and in that gospel of divine humanity, hope and love whose more childish form "decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away."

DISCOVERING GOD.

By Rabbi Charles Fleischer.

Emerson, so finely fitted to be the seer of our American democracy and the poetic prophet of the new religion which here is to be, says to Man:—

> "Thou art the unanswered question;
> Couldst see thy proper eye,
> Always it asketh, asketh;
> And each answer is a lie."

Certainly this suggestive characterization holds true of our theology. Inevitably we interrogate the everlasting mystery, we get answer or we make it—"and each answer is a lie." Always man has theologized, but never has he succeeded in formulating a final solution of the mystery. From fetichism and idolatry to ethical monotheism and reverent agnosticism, the errant, erring mind of man has ranged, to find himself always beset by honest doubt, and mournfully obliged to say: "Our little systems have their day—they have their day and cease to be."

I do not deny that there have been centuries of complete faith in any one particular theology, but I speak here of Man as measured by ages in his attempt to know God. Long ago the writer of Job asked: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" And yet, although idolators and Jews and Christians have been ready to defend more or less lovingly or fiercely the finality of their theology, yet thinking men in every generation (and never more than today) continue to rejoice and ask and, with chastened spirit, sadly to rejoice in whatever further bit of revelation they may get of God. But mystery and unsatisfied questioning remain, despite the wisest theologians, philosophers and scientists.

Recently Dr. Lyman Abbott announced his discovery of God. The "discovery" does credit to his capacity for growth; but, while it may be new and startling to orthodox folks, whether Christians or Jews, to those who know their Spinoza and their Spencer—and to the liberals and the free religionists comes the temptation to quote Horatio's speech to Hamlet: "There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave to tell us this." Perhaps it was only a sensational newspaper reporter to whom this was new, and Dr. Abbott had long evolved his own theology from its crude beginnings in his child mind to its present maturer state, from belief in God as a "greater Man" to his conception of God as infinite and eternal Energy," the personal Power that makes for righteousness and to whom man is closely akin in spirit.

And yet, I venture to doubt whether Lyman Abbott (I use him simply as a convenient example) is happier or more satisfied in his last state of mind than in his first. If he could live an-

other 50 years and continue to grow in wisdom and in purity, he would still be discovering God. I do not mean to suggest that theologizing is a foolish and a futile process. On the contrary, I believe that, by its very nature, the soul of man—if only in the effort at self-knowledge—"always asketh, asketh" and must continue to ask although "each answer is a lie."

However, one process of inquiry may well be better than another. In my opinion, theologians and religionists have begun at the wrong end by reasoning from God manward instead of from man Godward. "The proper study of mankind is Man." Our poets are the real seers—and Alexander Pope was right in this dictum.

Our one hope for increased knowledge of God is through the study and the development of our human nature. Psychology and ethics, abstract and concrete, idealistic and practical, are our best means towards a comparative solution of the eternal problem. Through searching man we shall know more and more of God. And the individual may, through purity, come closer and closer to the soul of the mystery. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And yet, though we may go on from knowledge to knowledge, from one to another formation of the answers which come to our everlasting questioning—the last infinitude of the truth must forever be beyond our ken, "feeling is all in all," and no attitude so well becomes man in the presence of the eternal mystery as reverent, yearning silence.

THE LOVED AND GONE.

By James H. West.

Glad thought we give, proved true by tears,
  To those, the loved and gone,
Who at our side in other years
  Inspired and helped us on.
Their presence lingers with us still,
  As stars amid the night,
The while they roam the heavenly hill
  Beyond our earthly sight.

Oh, more than these who greet our eyes
  Are ye with silent feet!
And gratefully we recognize
  Your benediction sweet.
We may not whisper loud each name,—
  Too sacred is our thought;
But humbly take, of praise or blame,
  The good ye to us brought.

Be near us still to aid and bless,
  Ye friends of other days!
Soul yet doth feel your fond caress,
  Your olden likeness raise.
Thus heart doth still respond to heart,
  And ye, though gone above,
Are never dead, but still are part
  Of all our life and love.

THE CHILD'S WORLD.

(Concluded.)

Ellen Creelman.

The child's world is a small world. It is true, at birth he enters the great world of humanity, but his own especial part consists of that only which he can use. He is not wise in the wisdom of the adult, but in his own small way be brings a wisdom in the form of an instinctive tendency to accept from the great world that which will be of use to him. But because of his incompleteness, his lack of discrimination with reference to that which will be of most use to him, the first requisite is a suitable environment in which to increase his strength. This protection is one of the chief ways of assisting the child to fulfill the purpose of his life. One of the most pathetic facts with reference to the young child's education is that he passes through this most important period of his life, unconscious of its deep significance to his whole life. He is laying the foundation from which future efforts shall evolve. He is weaving into this foundation such impressions of life as he may receive from his environment. The first

knowledge is received incidentally, but not more faithfully used is the later definite knowledge than are these first impressions. Shall he be guided to accept in this unconscious life the laws which govern his growth, and thus build such a foundation as will sustain the best possible structure of which in later life he may be capable of building? Or shall he be permitted to build in careless disregard of the laws governing all progress, and later see the beautiful superstructure, the fine finishing touches, disappear in the crumbling ruins of the foundation? Let there be no unnecessary postponement or delay, but let this character-building go on steadily and securely, the only possible way to preserve the later Truth and Beauty which alone can satisfy the individual.

The young child unconsciously recognizes the fact that exercise is the law of growth and at once commences to put forth effort in his feeble way. He grasps with his hands, he pushes with his feet. He commences the use of his senses. He hears but dimly. He sees but vaguely, yet only through the use of what power he has can he increase his strength. There is within the child that which impels him to put forth effort, to try his strength. . In doing this he comes in contact with his environment, to which he must adjust himself. Failing here, he is destined to cramp every effort towards a higher soul-freedom. In early life let the child be protected against that which with the later reason he may be able to accept and reconcile as that which is to be expected. Let the child be guided as he reaches forth to enlarge his world, guided as his powers awaken, so that little by little he may place in his picture of life, in its proper setting the impression received; let him be guided in his first forms of expression, lest in his incompleteness he place self first, ere he knows that such an attitude will do more to retard his progress than all else. The young child needs sympathetic suggestion from his own point of view, and should not have thrust upon him the point of view of the adult.

Froebel describes the first three years of the child's life as a period of "unconscious rest in God" and the young child should be permitted if possible to unfold his powers in an atmosphere of quiet restfulness free from excitement, com-

plexity, from all that wearies or overstimulates. Simplicity and purity should characterize all that concerns the life of the child. In this atmosphere he may be trusted to develop naturally and indicate his need of suggestion. As the child's powers unfold, as his world enlarges, he may be aided, not by direct teaching, but by sympathetic suggestion to appreciate that which is included in his environment. Thus gradually will he perceive relationships and be prepared for the later fulfillment of duty thus recognized.

At first the normal child looks and listens, later he asks questions with reference to that which he sees around him. The educator should assist the child to keep the unity of his world as he arises from simplicity to complexity. The child beholds his own life mirrored in the life around him. As he feels the working of this law within himself he sees the same law governing all life around him. Vaguely at first, it is true, but thro' life, thro' effort, shall his vision become clear. He sees the intermingling of life, plant, animal and human, how one contributes to the welfare of others. He sees the rain, sun, moon, and stars, earth, water in one great whole. He does not burden himself with the awesome wonderfulness of this great whole unless it is thrust upon him. Fleeting glances satisfy him until his attention is strong enough to be held for more lengthy consideration. His first relationships in human life include his parents, brothers, sisters, friends and others, who contribute to the comfort of the home. He is interested in the carpenter who builds the home, for he commences with the useful. He traces the wood back to the tree in the forest, then to the seed in the ground, the seed which, aided by sun, soil and water, awakened and reached upwards to live a greater life. The child may be told of the growth of the tree, of its usefulness for building purposes. The child is interested in the story of the loaf of bread, and the mother traces it back to its source, showing the many persons needed, together with natural forces to make the loaf of bread possible. When old enough she tells him of the farmer's field, of the sowing of the wheat seeds, which, aided by the sun, rain and soil, grow taller and taller, until the little seeds ripened and were sent to the mill, where they were ground into flour. As the child eats his bread and milk, the mother tells him of the

cow, eating the green grass and drinking the clear water in the farmer's fields. The child is always interested in the journey of the raindrops from ocean to ocean. He sees the domestic animals, and learns his first lessons of kindness to animals by observing the right attitude of others towards them, later he is more directly taught consideration of their rights. The child is interested in the flowers and trees. At first he sees them cared for by others. When older he plants the seeds and observes their growth. He sees the birds and butterflies and learns to respect their humble lives. With childish awe he looks upon the sun, moon and stars. Offer the child sympathetic suggestion with reference to all of his interests, all that concerns his life, but thrust not upon him suggestions which he cannot appreciate. Let the child spend as much time as possible in the open air, and thus avoid the too frequent cramp of vision. The large space will aid the child with reference to freedom physically, and mentally, and will discourage the giving of too much consideration to the insignificant things of life. Thus the young child in his unconscious life, as he makes effort to increase his strength, is wisely guided to naturally use his strength, guided that he may take the right attitude towards all that becomes a part of his world. He should be guided in the use of his will, that his strength to do that which he knows is right may develop with his increasing intelligence. Thus shall he become gradually prepared for the use of a higher degree of freedom; thus shall he learn that freedom is not a gift to be bestowed by nation or individual, but a prize to be won anew by every individual who would possess it. Behold the little traveler upon his way. Be not anxious but deeply in earnest as to his welfare, and lovingly desirous of assisting him. Prepare him through a careful consideration of the simple things of life in their true relationships, to walk as steadily as possible as he enters year by year into the more complex life.

Thust for the child must be asked, a deeper appreciation of his needs, the guidance of one who not only loves but also understands him, a clearer vision as to that which belongs to his little world, a willingness to permit him to walk therein until he naturally pushes aside his limits and enters the next stage. Not gifts are asked for the child, for that is not according to

the plan of life; but opportunities—opportunities until such time when he may reasonably be asked to make his own opportunities, and wrest from them the lessons they have to offer, or, using them as he may, stand courageously by the result.

THE RESURRECTION.

Alfred W. Martin.

To the great majority of Christians the belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of their religion. They feel that it would fall in ruins if this foundation-stone were removed. And the burial service which begins with the words, "I am the resurrection and the life," simply illustrates the Christian's conviction that his hope of immortality hinges on this supreme miracle of the New Testament. Now, the more wonderful and strange any event that is described, the greater the amount of evidence required to believe in its occurrence. We need comparatively little evidence to believe the miracles of healing because they are not so very wonderful, not at all strange to us, for our present day physicians accomplish by similar methods of suggestion and auto-suggestion, results akin to those recorded in connection with the miracles of healing. But in the case of a physical resurrection we need an extraordinary deal of evidence because this is the most wonderful miracle of all.

Turning, then, to the records, the first fact we have to note is that not one of the gospels furnishes a first-hand report of what is recorded. Nowhere in the New Testament have we the testimony of an eye-witness as to what occurred after the crucifixion. The guards at the tomb were asleep, the disciples had fled to Galilee and the earliest of our gospel reports goes back only to 70 A. D. or thereabouts, forty years after the death of Jesus.

We have to note next that the triple tradition—the story of the life of Jesus in which the first three gospels agree—contains no account of any miraculous return to life nor of any ascension to heaven. And this triple tradition, the orthodox Congregationalist, Abbott, author of the article "Gospels,"

in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, tells us represents our worthiest source of information concerning Jesus.

A third point to be noted regarding the general character of the evidence connected with the resurrection is that when we compare the accounts given in the gospels with each other and then with the story related by the apostle Paul, we find them to be hopelessly contradictory—a fact entirely inconsistent with the theory of infallibility, while just what we should expect from reporters who were sincere, honest, earnest, but fallible men.

Look with me for a moment at the gospel records. Beginning with the earliest, Mark, the author tells us that Jesus was crucified at the third hour and died at the ninth, thus making the duration of the death-process six hours. Just before sunset Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pontius Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Pilate expresses surprise on hearing that Jesus is dead, but the soldiers having confirmed the statement, the governor yields to Joseph's request. As it was unlawful to bury on the Sabbath, Joseph hastily deposits the body of Jesus in a cool rock-hewn tomb. Thirty-six hours later, three women visit the tomb and find it empty. A young man dressed in white and seated at the spacious entrance tells them Jesus has gone to Galilee and that the disciples will find him there. Such is the simple and frank story of our earliest evangelist, giving no explanation of the disappearance of Jesus' body, simply affirming the opinion of a young man as to what had happened. Here the account of the earliest of the gospel writers ends. The remainder of the chapter which contains this narrative does not concern us because those verses (xvi: 9-20) are admitted by all scholars to be spurious.

Coming next to the authors of the gospels named after Matthew and Luke, we observe that their accounts of post-crucifixion events represent quite an enlargement upon the simple narrative in the Mark gospel, and that almost every additional feature in their stories makes a case of mutual contradiction. Were this the time and place for a critical analysis of these narratives we might compare the several amplifications and note their contradictory elements. But as we are not holding a session of the adults' study-class, I must simply

refer you to the records and ask you to note for yourselves the distinctive features of the four gospel accounts and the respects in which they are mutually contradictory.

We come next to the apostle Paul. He has this point of superiority as a witness over the gospel authors, namely, that we know the man and his work; we know, too, that he wrote the first letter to the Corinthians and the letter to the Galatians, and between the years 55 and 57 A. D., whereas we do not know who wrote the gospels nor can exact dates be assigned them. But when we ask concerning the value of Paul's testimony, concerning his competency as a witness on the question of the resurrection of Jesus, we are compelled to confess considerable disappointment. Paul tells us that he never saw Jesus in the flesh at all, only as a "vision," when on his way to Damascus to assist in the persecution of the Nazarenes. A careful study of this incident in all its details and of its effect on the apostle forces me to the conclusion, which I have not time now to argue in full, that the appearance of Jesus after death to which he refers in his epistle (I. Cor., xv:3-8) must be classed with the vision on the road to Damascus.

Such, then, are the depositions of the four main witnesses. On their testimony the verdict of proven or not proven must rest with reference to the miracle of a physical resurrection.

Suppose the case were one of proving the signature to a will and that the plaintiff produced four witnesses, three of whom could give no account of themselves, while the testimony of the fourth contradicted that of the other three at every important point, what should we say? Well, this is exactly the kind of evidence we have to deal with in the New Testament records regarding the resurrection. The testimony of the gospel writers amounts only to this: somebody said that somebody saw Jesus somehow, somewhere, after he had been entombed. The testimony of Paul is invalidated by the inevitable conviction that his "seeing" of Jesus after he had been buried was tantamount only to a vision.

But be our attitude to the various evidences what it may, one thing at least is certain. No one would ever think of believing the story of a physical resurrection if it were found outside the Bible; no one would ever think of regarding such

a miracle except as a myth, or at best as a legend, if met with in secular literature. But finding it in the New Testament, the majority of Christians accept it simply as a part of their religious faith and would not think of believing it otherwise. Many do as Albertus Magnus and Aquinas did; they set the story apart as something too sacred to be investigated. As though any subject could be desecrated by consecrated effort to determine its truth. As though the very sanctification of a subject were not in some degree conditioned by its verfication.

Did time permit it would be interesting and perhaps also profitable to discuss the various explanations that have been offered of the alleged appearance of Jesus after his death. Suffice it, however, to say that these explanations are fraught with difficulties fully as great as those attaching to the original narratives.

And now I pass from criticism of the records to certain illuminating considerations derived from both physical science and historical science. In the light of these two sciences I hold that belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus is impossible.

Physical science has taught us that death is not the simple thing it was thought to be in earlier centuries, but a complicated series of processes, thus putting a serious difficulty in the way of belief in a physical resurrection. The dying process begins with the nervous system, then follow the glands and tissues, in definite order, according to the nature of the disease; then the blood coagulates and the muscle-plasm grows increasingly rigid; then the protoplasm of the body undergoes chemical change and then changes occur in the brain neurons; all of these processes being part of the complete extinction of life. Hence the reanimation of a corpse after an interval of twelve or more hours would involve the reversing of this entire series of processes, and to suppose such a reversal would be as Dr. Stanley Hall (to whom I am indebted for this suggestion) says, "to stultify science and common sense." Physical science offers another and perhaps more cogent objection to belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus, namely, in that fundamental axiom of all science: Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same moment. Yet we read in the New

Testament that Jesus reappeared after his death in bone and flesh to the disciples and that, as such, he passed through closed doors and solid walls; a statement that can be accepted only if we deny the self-evident truth that two bodies cannot simultaneously occupy the same space.

Historical science forbids belief in a physical resurrection inasmuch as the history of religious thought in Palestine shows us that the prevailing belief among the Jews of the first century regarding post-mortem conditions was not resurrection from the **grave,** but resurrection from **the dead.** Jesus and his contemporaries held that after death all souls departed to the under world or "sheol," as the Hebrews called it, divided into two sections, "Gehenna," the abode of the bad, and "Paradise," the dwelling place of the good. One could look across from one region to the other, as we learn from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, in which the former looks across from Gehenna to Paradise, where he sees Lazarus and beseeches God to let Lazarus give him a drop of water wherewith to cool his burning tongue. When Jesus spoke to the thief on Calvary he assured him that his abiding place would be with him in Paradise (rather than in Gehenna, as would have been supposed for a thief). But life even in Paradise was not regarded as desirable, for it meant a colorless, shadowy existence; it meant leaving the upper world of sunshine and beauty, leaving the sphere of ambition, effort, aspiration, achievement. And so there grew up very naturally the belief that at least those who were in the Paradise section of Sheol would escape and come up from below to the light and life of the earth. Hence we find Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians declaring that all those in Sheol who believe that Jesus is the Messiah will arise, be clothed with spiritual bodies and ascend into the air to meet the Christ when he comes down upon the clouds from heaven, to establish his new kingdom on the earth. Christ, he says, is the "first fruits of them that slept;" he, in other words, will be the first to ascend from Sheol, after him would arise all the believers in his Messiahship and these, together with believers still living on the earth, would be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air."

Historical science, then, assures us that the word resurrection signified at this time simply rising from Sheol and not at all any physical resurrection from the grave. This is its meaning all through the New Testament. Consequently it never occurred to the disciples to go to the tomb to see if Jesus' body was there. They had no interest in his body, nor did the notion of a physical resurrection arise until a much later day, when a certain sect appeared claiming that there had been a physical resurrection.

Since then the belief spontaneously arose that life even in Paradise was undesirable and that the good people there must somehow escape from it, what was more natural than that the disciples should have come to the conclusion that their master, least of all, could be kept in Sheol. Recall the circumstances that followed the crucifixion. They had fled in terror from Jerusalem to Galilee. There it was that they had learned to know and love and revere their master. There it was that they had lived with him, day in and day out, and been inspired by his gospel of the kingdom. What wonder, then, that they should come to feel that he who had lived a life so humanly complete, so divinely inspired, who had manifested qualities of heart by which their characters had been lifted to a higher level, could not be still in Sheol; that he of all men could not die, could not be held, even in Paradise, but must have ascended to heaven and would soon return to complete his great mission on the earth. Had not the Greeks believed that their true heroes were translated to heaven immediately upon the completion of their life work on earth? Surely, then, it was at least equally natural for the disciples to feel that he who was so near to God, so helpful to man, must have risen from the realm of shades to the land of celestial light and would return to finish the work he had little more than begun. For the people of Israel Jesus had held out a great hope. When dejected and discouraged the disciples said, "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel." On that their hearts were set. He had said that the cause would soon triumph, that a generation would not pass away until he should come in power and glory as the head of the kingdom, and then all wrongs would be righted, all oppressors be punished, while

the just, pure and meek would inherit the earth. For a time the splendid vision had left them, the glorious expectation was dashed to the earth. He had gone to the realm of shades. Then out of the depths of their despair arose the mighty conviction that he could not possibly remain there, that he must have risen and was hovering over them and that therefore the kingdom was still a glorious possibility. Let them,then, watch and wait, for even as a thief in the night the great miracle of earth's transformation might be accomplished. How entirely in keeping with our own experience this conviction of the disciples is. When engrossed in business interests or absorbed in intellectual studies we may entertain doubts as to the reality of a hereafter. But when bending over the dead form of a friend, or standing at the grave where one we loved is being laid away, scepticism about immortality is impossible. Then the stone of unbelief is rolled away and voices seem to whisper, "He is not here; he is risen." And just in proportion to the grandeur of the life that has departed and our sense of dependence on it is our faith intensified in the immortality of that soul. Precisely so was it with the disciples of Jesus. They had grown in the course of their discipleship to regard Jesus as the first of men and to feel increasingly dependent upon him. Hence when left alone in Galilee memories of the blessed days of their togetherness with him crowded their thoughts, the remembrance of what he was, what he did, what he aimed to do, what he had left unfinished, took such hold of their hearts as to persuade them of his aliveness, of his resurrection from sheol. At the thought they gain new courage; hope is revived; they feel that the cause for which he labored is not lost, as at first it seemed; he will come again and complete his unfinished task.

Given that conviction that Jesus had thus risen from the dead and it needed only a hint, a suggestion, a rumor that some one had seen him to originate the belief in a resurrection from the grave. In other words, the story of a physical resurrection arose after the belief in a resurrection from sheol had been established. In other words, the belief in a physical resurrection was not the cause but the consequence of the renewed faith and courage in the hearts of the terror-stricken disciples. Those stories of a physical resurrection represent the legendary mate-

rial which embellished the simple nucleus of fact that the disciples had regained their lost nerve while in Galilee and quickly concluded that their master must have risen from the realm of shades whither he had gone when summoned by death. Out of their belief in his resurrection from **the dead** Christianity arose. Not out of a material fact, but out of the spiritual fact of the revived faith in the hearts of his disciples did the new religion spring. The historical fact connected with the resurrection is that the disciples could not believe that Jesus was in sheol, and from this fact were eventually developed the legendary narratives of a physical resurrection.

Thus are we led from the rather negative results of our survey of the New Testament narratives to the positive and constructive truths: First, that the New Testament use of the word resurrection means coming up from sheol, and that therefore Paul and the disciples so understood the term. Second, that the belief in a physical resurrection was the effect, not the cause of the resurrection of courage and hope in the bereaved and despairing disciples. Third, that Christianity, instead of being rooted in an alleged event which both physical and historical science make it impossible for us to believe, originated in that genuine historical and supremely vital experience of the disciples which has been described in detail. In other words, Christianity is rooted in one of the finest intuitions of the human heart, namely, that virtue is immortal, that Jesus lived so grandly and gloriously as to have made his disciples absolutely certain of his immortality and of their own immortality. Finally, let me reinforce the positive constructive purpose of this discourse by adding a fourth truth: Towering far above all our critical analysis of the gospels and epistles and above all our speculative and scientific objections stands the fact that **spirituality of life** is the root and source of our faith in a future life, of our faith

> "That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void
> When God has made the pile complete.
>
> * * *
>
> That good will fall
> At last, far off, at last, to all—
> And every winter change to spring."

A WORD FROM JAPAN.

The following excerpt from a letter recently received from Japan will interest our readers, coming, as it does, from a scholarly, liberal thinker, who last year delivered an address before the Congress of Liberal Thinkers at Amsterdam, Holland. We hope to publish an article on "Religion in Japan" from Mr. Toyosaki's pen in the June issue of this monthly:

"I have examined the card outlining the principles of your movement and find myself perfectly at one with you on the essentials of religion. I formerly belonged to the Unitarian movement in Tokyo, but have now made myself quite independent of it, because I want to try to realize my own religious ideals according to my own principles. It is very delightful to find that there is such a movement as yours so near to Japan. Seattle is only on the other side of the Pacific. I hope we can somehow co-operate with each other. I wish you every success. Kindly extend my greetings to the supporters of your movement, who, though yet without personal acquaintance, are my friends in religious life.

"B. TOYOSAKI.

"Tokyo, February 20, 1905."

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

TACOMA.

The March calendar contained no less than twelve "events," hence the month has been one of great activity in the First Free Church. The new fortnightly evening meetings, held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, are being well attended. There continues to be a steady increase at the Sunday services. The largest audience of the year assembled on the 5th, when Mr. Martin visited us and preached on "The Divinity in Jesus and in Us." After the services Mr. Martin addressed the Sunday School. The Liberal Club quarterly dinner, at the Tacoma Hotel on the 9th, was a signal success. There was not a dull moment throughout. The principal speaker and guest of the evening was Mr. Martin, who, at the conclusion of his speech,

read a fraternal letter from the Seattle Non-Sectarian Club, which was more than appreciated. Mr. Nesbitt was charged with the agreeable duty of conveying an expression of our esteem on the occasion of his visit to our Seattle friends next month. It would occupy too much space to chronicle all the details of our varied activities during March. Suffice it to say that the characteristic enthusiasm and **esprit de corps** of the Free Church is as marked as ever, with no signs of diminution. New members are enrolling and the "interested" friends increase in number every week. Though our success seems to be a well established fact, we have no thought of resting on our oars. "Eternal vigilance" will continue to be our watchword.

SEATTLE.

The Adults' Class, which meets Sunday mornings in Christensen's Hall to discuss with Mr. Martin the principles and ideals of Universal Religion, listened, on the morning of March 5th, to an interesting address by Mr. C. L. Whaley, one of the members of the Society. Mr. Martin was at Tacoma, speaking for Mr. Nesbitt in the First Free Church, where a very large audience greeted him. On the following Thursday evening he addressed the men's "Liberal Club" at the Tacoma Hotel banquet, on "Fraternity," taking occasion at the beginning of his speech to present the greetings and congratulations of the Seattle men's "Non-Sectarian Club" as written by the secretary and voted upon at the meeting held March 8th.

The Woman's Union gave a very successful Birthday Party in Wilson's Hall on the evening of February 28th. The attendance exceeded the expectations of the committee, but additional chairs and tables were procured and all present enjoyed a thoroughly sociable evening.

The Junior Branch of the Society held its March social at Wilson's Hall on the evening of the 11th. The principal feature was a stereopticon talk on the World's Fair at St. Louis, by Mr. Martin, assisted by the president, John Dewhurst, who "ran" the 80 slides in expert fashion. Adults were admitted on payment of a small entrance fee, which resulted in adding $4.20 to

the treasury, making its present cash on hand well over $100.00.

Twenty new members, who had signed the membership roll since January 1st, were formally welcomed to the Society in an "address of welcome," delivered Sunday, March 5th, at the close of the discourse. Once in two months such an address is given, and since October there has been an average of eleven accessions per month to the Society.

Michael Angelo was the subject of an illustrated lecture, given at the State University on the evening of March 3d by Mr. Martin.

The Men's Non-Sectarian Club held its regular monthly dinner at the Hotel Washington, March 8th. Mr. C. L. Whaley presided. Mr. M. Kelly recited a humorous poem, several good stories were told and Major Cicero Newell read a very interesting paper on "The Religion of the Dakota Indians," followed by an informal discussion in which Mr. Sanders' part was so interesting that he was requested to address the club at a later day on his conversations with the Indians of Eastern Washington. At the April meeting Mr. Nesbitt will give an illustrated talk on "South Africa," where he lived for several years as vice-principal of the Cape Normal College.

LOS ANGELES.

Mrs. G. Harry Wright, for several years an active member of the Tacoma Free Church, was recently elected clerk of the Los Angeles Fellowship Council and sends us the following interesting items:

March 5th was a great day for the Los Angeles Fellowship. In the morning Mr. Mills preached his inaugural sermon, the house being filled to its utmost capacity. His subject was, "What the Fellowship Stands For," and he summed it up in the words, "trustful and unselfish living." In the evening Simpson's Auditorium, which has the largest seating capacity of any building in the city, was filled to the doors and many were unable to gain admittance. The society has over eight hundred members and some thirty committees have been organized for philanthropic, institutional, administrative and social work.

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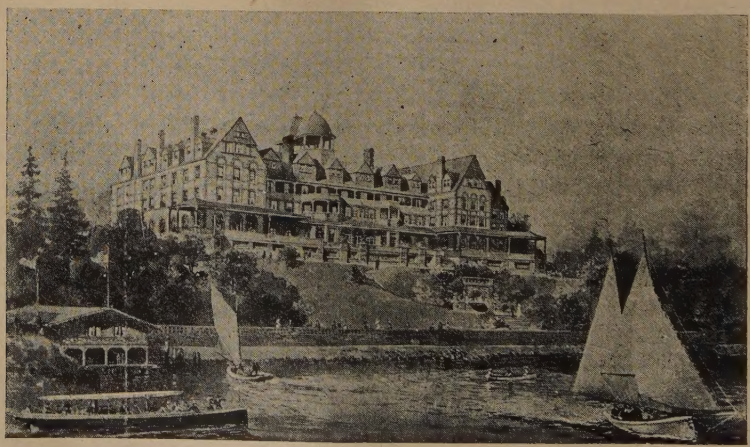

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